

Role of Teacher Education in the Achievement of MDGs

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Jan 21, 2013

Revised Aug 20, 2013

Accepted April 26, 2014

Keyword:

Role
Teacher education
Achievement
MDGs

ABSTRACT

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which include eight goals have been framed to address the world's major development challenges by 2015. In India, considerable progress has been reported to be made in the field of basic universal education, gender equality in education, economic growth and other human development related aspects. Even though the government has implemented a wide array of programmes, policies, and various schemes to combat these challenges, further intensification of efforts and redesigning of outreach strategies are needed to give momentum to the progress toward achievement of the MDG-2 (Achieve Universal Primary Education) and MDG-3 (Promote Gender Equality). To universalize elementary education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is one of the major schemes introduced by the government in 2002. Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education are the components of SSA. Universal enrolment is one of the specific objectives of SSA. The strategy of implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme has also played a role in enhancing the enrolment and retention of the students. To focus on girls' education, several schemes have been incorporated within SSA. National Programmes for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVS) focus on primary education for girls. In order to achieve this, there is need to ensure sufficient number of schools along with adequately trained teachers for quality instruction and effective functioning of primary education programmes. This is truer in the context of RTE- 2009. Achieving universal schooling requires cent percent enrolment and it also means ensuring that all children continue to attend classes till completion of eight years of schooling (6-14 years) in the near future. Education benefits not only at the individual level but also for the development of country as a whole. Further gender inequality in education has a direct impact on economic growth through lower levels of quality of human capital. In the light of these emergent issues in school education there is need to develop a sense of higher levels of commitment and sincerity among the prospective teachers. The teacher education programmes need to be reoriented to look into the issues related to enrolment and retention of children along with ensuring quality inputs in teaching-learning process. Hence an effort has been made to address to these issues in school education for the effective designing of on-going teacher education programmes to enable the prospective teachers as well as those in schools for effective implementation of different interventionistic programmes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Millennium Declaration was adopted in September 2000 by all 189 member states of the United Nations General Assembly, as the world leaders agreed to a set of time bound and measurable goals and targets for combating extreme poverty, hunger disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women (by the year 2015). The goals, which have been part of the global development objectives for a number of years as endorsed by member states of the United Nations, are called Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These are a series of 8 goals and 18 targets along with 48 quantifiable indicators for monitoring the process of achievements of MDGs.

GOAL 1 : ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

It includes the following targets which are further followed by indicators.

Target 1 : Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

1. Proportion of population below \$1 (ppp) per day.
 2. Poverty gap ratio
 3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption.
- Target 2 :** Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
4. Prevalence of under weight children under 5 years of age.
 5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption.

GOAL 2 : ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Target 3 : Ensure that, by 2015, children every where (boys and girls alike) will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education
7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5.
8. Literacy rate of 15-24 years olds.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Target 4 : Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education.
10. Ratio of literate women to men in 15-24 years old age group.
11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector.
12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament.

GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Target 5 : Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under five mortality rate.

13. Under five mortality rate
14. Infant mortality rate
15. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles

GOAL 5 : IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

Target 6 : Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

16. Maternal mortality ratio
17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

GOAL 6 : COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Target 7 : Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

18. HIV prevalence among 15-24 year old pregnant women.
19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate.
20. Number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

Target 8 : Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria.
22. Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures.
23. Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis.
24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course (DOTS)

GOAL 7 : ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Target 9 : Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

25. Proportion of land area covered by forest.

26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area.

27. Energy use (kg. oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP).

28. Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons).

29. Proportion of population using solid fuels.

Target 10 : Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.

30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural.

Target 11 : By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

31. Proportion of urban population with access to improved sanitation.

32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure (owned or rented).

GOAL8 : DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.

It includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction both nationally and internationally.

Target 13 : Address the special needs of the least developed countries.

It includes tariff and quota free access for least developed countries exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction.

Target 14 : Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states (through the programme of action for the sustainable development of small island developing states and the outcome of the twenty – second special session of the General Assembly).

Target 15 : Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.

Some of the indicators listed below are monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, land locked countries and small island developing states.

Official development assistance (ODA)

33. Net ODA, total and to LDCs, as percentage of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/ Development Assistant Committee (DAC) donors' gross national income.

34. Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation).

35. Proportion of bilateral ODA of OEDC/DAC donors that is united.

36. ODA received in landlocked countries ad proportion of their GNIs.

37. ODA receive in small island developing states as proportion of their GNIs.

Market Access

38. Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and LDCs, admitted free of duties.

39. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries an agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries.

40. Agricultural support estimate for OECD countries as percentage of their GDP.

41. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity.

Debt Sustainability

42. Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (Cumulative).

43. Debt relief committed under HIPC initiative, US\$.

44. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services.

Target 16 : In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.

45. Unemployment rate of 15-24 year-olds, each sex and total.

Target 17 : In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.

46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis.

Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

47. Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population.

48. Personal computers in use per 100 population and internet uses per 100 population.

All these indicators are monitored separately for the least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, landlocked countries and small island developing states.

The MDGs symbolize a focus on results at the country level, and the achievement of selected targets depends largely on the understanding of their qualitative and quantitative dimensions, their dynamics and inter dependence, and the set of policies, programmes and projects (PPPs) being implemented to reach those targets. India's rights-based laws and flagship development programmes are significant steps in improving the lives of millions -- a life with access to adequate food and income; to basic education and health services; to clean water and sanitation; and to empower women. India's march towards the MDGs is however, hampered by persistent inequalities, particularly gender inequality. This has resulted in inadequate access to basic services for the vulnerable groups such as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities, and particularly the women among these groups.

2. OBJECTIVES

- a. To study the achievement of MDGs in India in terms of: (i) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (ii) Achieve universal primary education; (iii) Promote gender equality and empower women;
- b. To study and analyse the role of teacher education in national development with special reference to the achievement of MDGs.
- c. To study government policy perspective with respect to Teacher Education.

3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Mittar et al. (2002) observed that the hundred percent enrollments of children in the age group of 6-10 years remains a distant dream in the state. More than 90 percent of children in the primary age group (6-10 years) had been enrolled in the schools during 1981-98. The gross enrollment ratio was 72.13 percent in 1971. Gross enrollment ratio of girls at all levels of school education had increased by more than 26 percentage points between 1971 and 1998. They found that the proportionate share of scheduled caste students enrolled at the primary level has increased from 16.47 percent to 41.88 percent between 1971 and 1998. The share of scheduled castes girls had also grown up from 13.03 percent to 42.07 percent during the same period. The study also found that the share of educational budget in the state income was 2.97 percent in 1990-91, which declined to 2.31 percent in 1997-98. This share was 3.11 percent in 1980-81.

Bhatti (2005) has observed that the number of rural students in comparison to urban students, in the institutions of higher education has drastically decreased [1]. The whole educational scene has qualitatively changed and is fast becoming urban centric. The cultural environment of modern educational institutions is also urban oriented. The educated person practically becomes an urban personality, usually unwilling or probably unable to reside in a village, after completion of education.

Yates (2006) discusses the relevance of curriculum to current UN Millennium targets to extend access to education and equality in education for women [2]. It is argued that curriculum cannot be bracketed out of 'education' if we are concerned about women's access to education. It is further argued that mere participation does not seem to bring progress and that what girls and women are being taught is a key issue in relation to extending quality to education.

Bhalotra and Bernanada (2008) in a recent study, described growth in school enrolment and completion rates for boys and girls in India [3]. Also an attempt was made to explore the extent to which enrolment and completion rates have grown over time. The study suggests that the number of elementary schools has a positive effect in attendance but no effect on completion. The ratio of female to male teachers in primary schools encourages attendance though, unexpectedly, this effect is not larger for girls than for boys. The overall conclusion of the study is that attaining the Millennium Development Goals for education is extremely unlikely in the poor states and as a result India as a whole.

Bhasin (2008) while analyzing India's position in terms of attaining the Millennium Development Goals concludes that India has done remarkably well in improving access to primary education, especially for girls [5]. The big thrust to primary education, through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and mid-day-meal scheme is

paying off as primary school enrolment reached 94 per cent in 2006, from only 72 per cent in 1991. In India, from 77 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in 1991, it has risen to 96 girls in 2006.

Mitra (2008) has discussed the budget of 2008-2009 [4]. The issues related to education and health are being tackled on a war footing because India's relative Human Development Index (HDI) ranking vis-a-vis other economies has changed little in relative terms. Education is one of the most critical factors which underlie the striving to ease entry into job markets through the creation of superior human capital.

Swaminathan (2008) expressed his view point regarding the rural knowledge revolution and has concluded that poverty will persist under conditions where the human resources are under-valued and material resources are over-valued [5]. It is expected that the spread of Grameen Gyaan Abhiyaan (GGA) developed in Aug. 2007 will put perceptible impact on the parameters governing human resource development. This in turn will lead to a paradigm shift from unskilled to skilled work in villages. This is the pathway to achieving sustainable food and nutrition security and thereby the first among the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, namely the eradication of hunger and poverty.

Akpomi (2009) has argued that the poverty reduction issue is to be addressed, as it is critical that the correct infrastructure be put in place [8]. One critical aspect of this infrastructure is the creation of an enterprise culture which will encourage graduates to take the risk of starting a business. It has been elaborated that entrepreneurship education and training and various disciplines can be taught to foster the interest in enterprise as a way of reducing poverty. It also emphasized the need to develop entrepreneurship to non-business students in higher education institutions and suggested a module, tripartite and practical means of delivery as well as assessment procedure.

Sharma (2009) has discussed that education for gender equality and the empowerment of women is an entry point to other opportunities and the educational achievements of women can have positive effects not only within the family but for many generations to come [7]. It is argued that, no country in the world, however advanced, has achieved true gender equality. However, comparison of India with developed countries reveals that in the latter, men and women both realize their full potential.

Singh (2009) analysed the literacy status of Punjab that has more than doubled from 1971 to 2001 and the state has been successful in reducing the gaps in literacy levels between males and females, rural and urban population and scheduled castes and non-scheduled caste populations. But the state still has about 30 percent illiterate population [10].

He stated that at the national level, the universalisation of elementary education has come to occupy the central position in the education policy. Earlier, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and now Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan have been launched for achieving the goal of universal elementary education. He found a significant expansion of higher educational facilities in the state in the post-economic reforms period. The number of state universities has increased from 3 to 7. However, all these newly established universities are still lacking in quality infrastructure and facilities.

Yadava (2009) put great emphasis on women education and states that gender inequality is one of the most crucial and yet one of the most persistent disparities in India where differences in female and male literacy rates are glaring, more so in rural area and among the disadvantaged sections of society [11]. It also stated that in the last 10 years female literacy has grown at a faster rate than the male literacy rate but, literacy in general and for women in particular has been the neglected child of educational efforts in recent years receiving minimal amount of funding when compared to investment in other sectors of education and this requires a serious review.

Goel (2011) has stated according to the data released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development that enrolment in primary classes across the country has dropped since 2007 [10]. Between 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, enrolment in classes 1 to 5 in Indian schools dropped by over 2.6 million. In 2011-2012, Finance Minister introduced a scholarship scheme for needy students belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes studying in classes ninth and tenth which would benefit about 40 lakh Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students.

Jawed et al. (2011) observed increasing employment opportunities and proper wage disbursement through implementation of MNERGA which has increased earning of rural households resulting in an increase in their purchasing power [11]. In 2006-07, in 200 districts, 2.10 crore households were provided employment and 90.5 crore persons days were generated. In 2010-11, 5.49 crore households have been provided employment. Women's participation under MGNREGS, measured in person-days, also exceeded their participation in erstwhile employment generation programmes like the Sampoorna Gramin Yojana (SGRY) and the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (MEGS). There are wide variations across states, within states and across districts in the share of work days for women. At the national level the participation of women has increased significantly from 40.65 percent in 2006-07 to 47.72 percent in 2010-11.

Jawed (2012) has observed that migration enables one just enough earning to tide over the distress in the lean season and in no way helps to accumulate capital [12]. Every year thousands of people across the length and breadth of the region leave their native villages in search of food and employment. MGNREGA arrest out-migration of unskilled, landless labor force from the rural areas to urban areas by ensuring up to 100 days of wage employment within their native jurisdiction so that these guaranteed wage employment can be judiciously and rationally utilized by the landless peasants during lean and distress seasons.

4. METHODOLOGY

In order to underline the dynamics of change in basic human and non-human indicators of development, the government documents and study reports were used. Documentary analysis was used to cull out facts from these documents. These documents include:

1. World Bank Reports
2. UNDP Reports
3. Economic survey of India
4. India Human Development Reports
5. Census 2011
6. ASER Reports
7. News Papers

5. EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE IN MDGs

Achieving the millennium development goals (MDGs) forms the central focus of many donor agencies policies, resulting in a renewed focus on basic education, striking a balance between providing basic education in line with the poverty reduction and training to attain broader socio-economic goals [13]. The eradication of poverty (MDG-1) has been an integral component of the strategy for economic development in the country.

The UN Development Group (UNDG) ensures that the MDGs remain at the centre of the concerted efforts of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. UNESCO's chief contribution to the MDGs comes from its Education for All (EFA) programme. Being complementary to the Millennium Development Goals; the EFA goals contribute directly or indirectly to the following:

MDG 1: Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger

MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

MDG 3: Empower Women and Promote Equality between Women and Men [14]

High poverty levels are synonymous with poor quality of life, deprivation of basic needs, illiteracy, poor health and low human resource development. Providing employment to the most vulnerable sections is an important method of eradicating poverty. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Jawahar Rojgar Yojana has been launched by the government to alleviate rural poverty. To deal with urban poverty "Swarnjayanti Shehhari Rojgar Yojana" has been launched in the country.

To universalize elementary education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is one of the major schemes introduced by the government in 2002. Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education are the other components of SSA. Universal enrolment is one of the specific objectives of SSA. The strategy of implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme has also played a role in enhancing the enrolment and retention of the students. To focus on girls' education, several schemes have been incorporated within SSA. National Programmes for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVS) focus on primary education for girls. To enhance access to secondary education and for quality improvement, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) has been launched in 2009.

Further gender inequality in education has a direct impact on economic growth through lower levels of the quality of human capital. Women in India are still far from making the best of the employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. They are lacking in skills, encouragement, support, and above all education. A major factor in the growth of an individual or section of society is literacy. The total literacy rate according to 2001 census was 64.83 percent out of which male literacy rate was 75.26 percent and that of female was 53.67 percent with a gender gap of 21.59 percent. Total literacy rate has increased to 74.04 percent (census 2011) out of which male literacy rate is 82.14 percent and female literacy rate is 65.46 percent with a gender gap of 16.68 percent [15]. In spite of all concerted efforts, there is gender gap in mass education, both in formal education (elementary to secondary to tertiary) as well as adult education (non-formal sector). The

launching of Saakshar Bharat Mission in 2009 is an endeavor to raise adult female literacy to 80% by 2017 from 64% (2011 census), encompassing more than 265 educationally backward districts of the country [14].

In order to achieve this, there is need to ensure sufficient number of schools along with adequately trained teachers for quality instruction and effective functioning of primary education programmes. This is more true in the context of RTE- 2009. At all India level, children's attendance shows a decline from 73.4 percent in 2007 to 70.9 percent in 2011 in rural primary schools [15]. Achieving universal schooling requires cent percent enrolment and it also means ensuring that all children continue to attend classes till completion of eight years of schooling (6-14 years) in the near future. Education, being a public good, must include principles of non discrimination, equity and justice. It must be an entitlement and a right that is guaranteed by the state. It should be visualized as a milestone for women's development, leading to National Development, enabling women to respond to challenges to secure better lives for them and for their children. These realities cannot be disassociated from the planning and implementation of educational policies. Therefore, in the absence of constructive, objective and progressive legislative reforms, which are mutually articulate and consistent, and can effectively address these facts and realities, the Goal of Millennium Development would remain an illusion. India is poised to become a super power; a developed country by 2020, and this aspect must be supported by ensuring universalized gender free education.

Role of Teacher Education

In the light of the above emergent issues in the school education, there is need to develop a sense of higher levels of commitment and sincerity among the prospective teachers. Teacher Education should bring a conversion in their attitude towards teaching. It must make the prospective teachers convinced of their work as it benefits boys and girls which is significant for the society and ultimately contributes towards the economy of the nation. The National Policy on Education (1986) expects a lot from the teachers by putting a tremendous faith and responsibility on them, since it boldly opined, "No people can rise above the level of its teachers." The National Policy further stated that the 'Status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society'. It is further highlighted in the policy that the government and the community should endeavour to create conditions which will help to motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines. So, it is implied that the training of the teachers should be so appropriate as can fulfil the expectations listed in the national policy document. The NCTE in its curriculum framework for Quality Teacher Education, 1998, summarised the teacher education system as "Teacher Education is an integral component of the educational system. It is intimately connected with the society and is conditioned by the ethos, culture and character of a nation. The constitutional goals, the directive principles of the state policy, the socio-economic problems and the growth of knowledge, the emerging expectations and the changes operating in education etc., call for an appropriate response from a futuristic education system and provide the prospective within which the education system programmes need to be viewed".

Suggestions

- Attitude to acquire adequate knowledge and to develop skills should be inculcated in teacher trainees.
- Sufficient number of schools along with adequately trained teachers for quality instruction and effective functioning of elementary education should be ensured. For this, programmes under Teacher Education should be redesigned.
- Programmes under SSA should be strengthened to ensure cent percent enrolment and retention.
- For quality teaching, Pre-service and in-service programmes should be focused.
- Active participation for development of self confidence among pupil teachers should be emphasized.
- Dedication towards teaching profession.
- Values oriented Teacher education should be provided.

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